

the reason why they are is because they represent the 12 million people who went to the polls in the face of incredible terrorist threats, and said, "We want to be free; we desire to live in a free society."

I told them—I said that they have awesome responsibilities to their people. They have the responsibility of improving the lives of men and women regardless of their religious status and nature; they have responsibilities to defeat the terrorists; they have a responsibility to unite their country. And I believe they will.

The formation of this Government is an important milestone toward our victory in Iraq. A lot of times people ask me about my attitude about things, and here's my attitude: The only way we can lose in Iraq is if we lose our nerve. And I'm not losing my nerve, and I know that the United States Marine Corps will not lose their nerve, either.

Yesterday was an important day, but I recognize we still have more work to do. Democracy in Iraq will be a major blow for the terrorists who want to do us harm. Democracy in Iraq will deny them safe haven. Democracy in Iraq will set a powerful example for people in a part of the world who are desperate for freedom.

It is such an honor to be here with the mighty United States Marine Corps and their families. May God bless you all, and may God continue to bless our country. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:34 p.m. in the Mess Hall at the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center. In his remarks, he referred to Sgt. Maj. James M. Ricker, USMC, and Brig. Gen. Douglas M. Stone, USMC Reserve, commanding general, Marine Air Ground Task Force Training Command; President Jalal Talabani, Speaker of Parliament Mahmoud al-Mashhadani, and Prime Minister-designate Jawad al-Maliki of Iraq. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Remarks Following a Visit With Former President Gerald R. Ford in Rancho Mirage, California

April 23, 2006

President Bush. It's such an honor to be with President and Mrs. Ford. The country

has produced a lot of fine citizens, and there's no two finer people than these two. Thank you for your hospitality, sir.

President Ford. We solved all the problems, didn't we? [*Laughter*]

President Bush. That's right—we sure did.

President Ford. Well, thank you for stopping by, George.

President Bush. God bless you.

President Ford. Same to you, sir.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:01 p.m. at President Ford's residence.

Remarks on Immigration Reform and a Question-and-Answer Session in Irvine, California

April 24, 2006

The President. Thank you all. Please be seated. Thanks for letting me come by. Tom, thanks for the invitation. What I thought I would do is share some thoughts with you on some issues that kind of, like, may be on the TV screen these days—[*laughter*—and then answer some of your questions. I'm interested to know what's on your mind.

First, I've had a fabulous trip to your unbelievably beautiful State. It started off in northern California—Cisco; then I went to Stanford; then I went to Napa Valley. Then I rode my bicycle on Earth Day in Napa Valley. Then I found out the mountains are a little steep in Napa Valley. [*Laughter*] I then went down and spent a fantastic time in Palm Springs. What an unbelievably diverse State, and it's a fantastic place to end my journey, here in Orange County. I want to thank you for giving me a chance to come by and visit with you.

Laura sends her very best. I, of course, checked in with her this morning before I headed over here, to see if she had any additional instructions for me for the day. [*Laughter*] She said, "Keep it short." [*Laughter*] I'm a lucky man to have Laura as a wife. You can imagine what it's like to be President—there's some pressure on your family, as you can imagine. The good news is, I've got a 45-second commute. [*Laughter*] And the better news is, I've got a wife who is a fantastic First Lady, who shares a passion